Security Council

Fifty-seventh year

Provisional

4497th meeting

Tuesday, 26 March 2002, 3.30 p.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Petersen	(Norway)
Members:	Bulgaria	Mr. Tafrov
	Cameroon	Mr. Ngoh Ngoh
	China	Mr. Wang Yingfan
	Colombia	Mr. Valdivieso
	France	Mr. Levitte
	Guinea	Mr. Fall
	Ireland	Mr. Ryan
	Mauritius	Mr. Gokool
	Mexico	Mr. Aguilar Zínser
	Russian Federation	Mr. Lavrov
	Singapore	Ms. Tan
	Syrian Arab Republic	Mr. Wehbe
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Eldon
	United States of America	Mr. Cunningham

Agenda

The situation in Afghanistan.

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02-30465 (E)

The meeting resumed at 3.35 p.m.

The President: The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Canada. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Heinbecker (Canada) (*spoke in French*): I thank you, Sir, for giving me this opportunity to speak before the Security Council on the situation in Afghanistan. The reaction we witnessed today in this open debate clearly shows how preoccupied the international community is with the well-being of the Afghan people and with the need to find a lasting solution to the endless crises that beset that country.

Canadians are very concerned by the unstable humanitarian situation in Afghanistan and the need to protect the Afghan civilian population, including persons internally displaced and refugees abroad.

The United Nations — in particular its representatives on the ground, under the guidance of Mr. Brahimi and Mr. Fisher — has shown enlightened leadership in its efforts to meet the challenges of governance, to respect security imperatives and cope with urgent humanitarian needs. We can only pay tribute to their leadership and urge them to persevere along this path.

(*spoke in English*)

We welcome the excellent report of the Secretary-General on the situation. It is clear, timely and detailed. The Interim Administration is laying important foundations for peace through building representative government structures, seeking to ensure the rule of law, promoting respect for human rights and looking to the implementation of sound economic policies. Much has been done in the first three months of the Administration, and while the task ahead is an onerous one, we congratulate the Interim Afghan Administration on the progress that it has made to date under very difficult circumstances. In particular, it is most gratifying to see that the schools are open and that the children are attending, including the girls.

The preparations for the emergency Loya Jirga in June will be key to installing a broadly representative administration to oversee the reconstruction of Afghanistan. The continuing work of the Special Commission is critical to its success, and we urge the Commission to ensure that the process remains equitable and transparent.

We are pleased that Afghan women are included in the Administration. We encourage the Administration and the United Nations to ensure that women are full partners in their respective decision-making processes and to ensure that resources are devoted to this important facet of the work. We say this not for reasons of political correctness, but for very, very practical reasons: old boys with old approaches will prolong the old problems, not generate new solutions. Let Afghanistan draw on the proven models, for example Turkey and Bangladesh, in involving women in public life and in the professions.

We urge that every effort be made to establish the independent human rights commission and the judicial commission called for in the Bonn Agreement. It is also important to continue to ensure that the civil service be transparent and that it represent all tribal and ethnic groups.

On the drug problem, the most recent poppy crop, due to be harvested in March, is another challenge. It is essential that the Interim Administration do what it can to reduce the incentives for poppy production and provide alternatives for farmers, including reformed rural credit systems. It goes almost without saying — but not quite — that the international community and the United Nations must support these particular efforts.

Canada is contributing to the stability and peace in Afghanistan in various ways, including military contributions to the coalition, direct support for the Interim Administration and the provision of additional humanitarian assistance and funds for longer-term reconstruction. Militarily, as part of the international efforts to ensure security, Canada has deployed 900 ground troops, plus or minus, to Afghanistan to work with the United States forces in Kandahar, through Operation Enduring Freedom. This brings the total Canadian contribution of forces to this Operation to something approximating 3,000.

As chair of the G-8 group of nations this year, Canada is also promoting discussions on the challenge of reintegration, disarmament and demobilization of Afghan soldiers. The G-8 Summit in Kananaskis will seek to address these issues and to catalyse support.

Financially, Canada's support for the Interim Administration is part of our ongoing commitment to the people of Afghanistan and to the long-term stability of that country. In January, we deposited with the

United Nations Development Programme our first $1.5 million contribution to support the Afghan Interim Authority Fund, and last week we announced a further contribution of $1.5 million to that Fund. That brings our total contribution to $3 million, an amount that is in addition to the $24 million in assistance that Canada has provided to Afghanistan during our current fiscal year, which ends in another week's time — $16 million since September. I think those figures are in Canadian dollars.

In the recent federal budget, Canada allocated a further $100 million for the humanitarian situation in Afghanistan and the region. Last week, the first $30.2 million of that commitment was allocated to United Nations agencies and other partners in support of activities such as demining, health, refugee integration, humanitarian assistance, education, security, peace-building and women's initiatives.

The United Nations clearly has the central coordinating role to play in the international support that is being offered to Afghanistan. Canada fully supports the leadership of Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi in his capacity as Special Representative of the Secretary-General. We welcome the recent appointments of Nigel Fisher and Jean Arnault as Deputy Special Representatives to assist Mr. Brahimi.

It is our hope that the proposed structure for the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan as outlined in the report of the Secretary-General will ensure a coordinated approach to this complex task. The United Nations role in channelling financial support and providing advice to the Interim Administration is key. It is essential that United Nations agencies work together in an efficient, effective and coordinated way. Effective coordination between the agencies and the mission's pillars will avoid duplication and ensure that every dollar of international assistance that is spent goes to benefit the Afghan people. Obviously, donor coordination is also important. The Interim Administration can, and should, play a critical role in programme development and in funding allocations.

Finally, let me convey a word of sympathy to the Afghan people with regard to the terrible earthquake tragedy that has afflicted them. It has caused terrible devastation, exactly not what the people of Afghanistan needed at this time.

The President: The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Bangladesh. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Chowdhury (Bangladesh): I begin, as indeed I should, by applauding Norway for the quality of its leadership of the Security Council this month.

The earthquakes of yesterday and today have compounded the sorrows of Afghanistan. Bangladeshis, our Prime Minister, Begum Khaleda Zia, our Government and our people are profoundly saddened by the resultant death and destruction. Our deepest condolences go out to the Interim Authority and to the Afghan people.

We thank the Secretary-General for his report (S/2002/278), which is a blueprint for the United Nations role in post-conflict peace-building in Afghanistan. We also thank Deputy Secretary-General Louise Fréchette for elaborating on the mandate of the proposed United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA).

With the authorization of the Council, UNAMA would be entrusted to assume a great responsibility at a critical juncture in Afghan history. Beyond the borders of Afghanistan, its contribution would also be critical for Central Asia. It would help create a regenerated Afghanistan at peace with itself and with its neighbours, and free from external political and military interference. It would contribute to building institutions that would prevent threats to regional and international stability and security from emanating from its territory. From that perspective, Bangladesh supports the basic operating principles and tasks proposed for UNAMA. We shall try to contribute to the success of the mission in every possible way.

We shall now make a few specific suggestions for the consideration of the Council in authorizing the mandate of the proposed United Nations mission. First, with regard to security, it is only in an enabling environment that UNAMA can carry out its mandate. The core functions of the mission are drawn from the Bonn Agreement, which entrusts the United Nations with specific responsibilities. The Agreement sets a calendar. It is imperative that the United Nations mission be able to make progress in sequence.

It is reassuring to learn that arrangements are being made for a smooth transfer of leadership in the

International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) from the United Kingdom to Turkey; but the question of the expansion of the multinational Force remains unclear. There are views that since the formation and training of an Afghan army and an effective police force will take time, an expanded peacekeeping force remains essential for the stability of Afghanistan. Chairman Karzai has spoken about such a need before the Security Council. In that regard, we shall call for continued international engagement.

Secondly, with regard to support to the Interim Authority, Tokyo raised our hopes for the reconstruction of Afghanistan. There was considerable donor commitment. That is for the long-term; in the short-term, Chairman Karzai needs to keep his administrative machinery functioning. The Interim Authority urgently requires immediate financial support. It is needed even to pay the salaries of public servants. This is deserving of the attention of the international community. We have witnessed a similar situation fraught with risks in the Central African Republic.

Thirdly, with regard to the regional dimension, the emphasis accorded by the Secretary-General to inter-pillar coordination at the regional level is noteworthy. That coordination, we believe, will go beyond relief, recovery and reconstruction. It would also extend to political aspects, including those entrusted to pillar I of the proposed mission. Durable peace in Afghanistan can be envisaged only with the support and cooperation of regional actors. We place our full trust and confidence in Ambassador Lakhdar Brahimi in that regard.

Fourthly, with regard to mine clearance and unexploded ordnance, as refugees and the internally displaced persons return, their access to livelihood, farms and orchards must be clear of anti-personnel mines and unexploded ordnance. The reasons are both humanitarian and economic. We urge that priority attention be given to this area of special concern.

Fifthly, with regard to the coordination of programmes, the United Nations Development Programme has put forward a wide-ranging set of policy recommendations and operational imperatives at its workshop on learning from experience for Afghanistan, the last session of which was held at the Permanent Mission of Germany on 4 and 5 February. With respect to security, the recommendations included the expansion of the international security force beyond Kabul and assistance for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration. The operational recommendations include ensuring a seamless transition from humanitarian relief to recovery and reconstruction; addressing the poverty gap; a comprehensive approach to returnees; ensuring human security; the use of microcredit as a tool for development; and so on. The conclusions of the workshop merit serious consideration. Some of them should be integrated into the set of principles and tasks of UNAMA.

Finally, I would like to reiterate Bangladesh's willingness to participate effectively in the building and reconstruction of Afghanistan. Bangladesh, too, began as a war-ravaged economy, in 1971. Today it is widely viewed as a success story across a broad spectrum of sectors. This was done by a wise combination of good macro-economic policies and appropriate utilization of external support. We have sought to achieve all this against the matrix of commitment to human rights, good governance and pluralist values. This has rendered us what we are today: a vibrant, progressive, modernizing polity of 130 million that is also one of the largest democracies in the world. Our innovative ways of development through a partnership of Government and civil society attracted much interest last week in Monterrey. As Foreign Minister Morshed Khan pledged in Tokyo, we are prepared — indeed, anxious — to share our experience in microcredit, empowerment of women, poverty alleviation, education and health with the Afghan people, with whom we share warm and historic links. It is our vision that someday, Afghanistan will play a constructive role in the comity of nations. It shall be our endeavour, in concert with others in this Chamber and beyond, to transform that vision into reality.

The President: I thank the representative of Bangladesh for his kind words.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Tajikistan, whom I invite to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Alimov (Tajikistan) (*spoke in Russian*): First of all, I should like to join the sincere expressions of deepest condolence and solidarity with the Government and people of friendly Afghanistan in connection with the devastating earthquake in the northern part of the

country, which has had tragic consequences, causing a great loss of human life.

Today's meeting of the Security Council, devoted to the consideration of the situation in Afghanistan, is of exceptional importance in giving new impetus to the peace process in that country after the fall of the inhuman Taliban regime. It is deeply symbolic that the Council is discussing this question under the able guidance of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Norway, a country chairing the Afghanistan Support Group and playing an important role in the efforts of the international community to return Afghan society to peace, national reconciliation and stability.

The report of the Secretary-General, submitted to the Council today, not only gives a profound, objective and dispassionate analysis of the situation in Afghanistan, but also lays out clear guidelines for the participation of the United Nations in the post-conflict restoration of Afghanistan. The new role of the Organization is an extremely broad-based and responsible one. It provides for virtually all possible forms of United Nations assistance to a reborn Afghanistan and is designed to ensure that, with the active participation of all levels of Afghan society, we can carry out the extremely complex task of strengthening the peace process and not allowing it to go backwards.

It is obvious that the process of harmonizing Afghan society and establishing an atmosphere of tolerance and national reconciliation in the country will not be easy. In Tajikistan, which has recently undergone a dramatic period of civil conflict, we understand this well. We express to the friendly people of Afghanistan our unwavering support for the restoration of lasting peace and the rebirth of their country. President Emomali Rakhmonov has repeatedly supported the efforts of the Interim Administration and its head, Mr. Hamid Karzai. The Government of Tajikistan is deeply interested in ensuring that the situation in neighbouring Afghanistan is normalized as soon as possible and that a lasting political settlement is reached on the basis of national reconciliation.

Taking part in the expanding programmes of humanitarian assistance to the Afghan people and actively developing Tajik-Afghan cooperation in various spheres, Tajikistan is making its contribution to the strengthening of the peace process in that country. In accordance with a joint project developed with Russia, Afghanistan will receive electric energy from Tajikistan in the very near future. Our specialists are preparing for participation in the rebuilding and restoration of roads that will connect the north of the country with Kabul. There are also plans for a number of projects in the economic, scientific and cultural areas. Our cooperation is expanding in joint efforts of the international community to eliminate international terrorism, extremism and illicit drug trafficking.

We are convinced that only active interaction and multilateral cooperation with Afghanistan, on a bilateral and multilateral basis, increasing international assistance to the Afghan people, will help bring about the earliest possible rebirth of a peaceful, united, neutral and prosperous Afghan society. The resurgence of Afghan society, the restoration of peaceful life and the opening of schools and cultural and health care institutions for all Afghans, including women and children, give us great hope. The consistent implementation of the Bonn Agreement, including the active work of the Special Independent Commission for the Convening of the Emergency Loya Jirga, gives Afghanistan a unique chance to open a new chapter in its long history. It is extremely important, as the Secretary-General emphasized, that the political aspirations of individuals and groups be achieved peacefully and constructively, and not undermine trust in the process and its legitimacy. We believe that the lessons of the inter-Tajik settlement, achieved under the aegis of the United Nations, could be used at this critical turning point for Afghan society.

We support the Secretary-General's recommendation to establish a United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan. We in Tajikistan believe that, under the leadership of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Ambassador Lakhdar Brahimi, and with the support of the world community and the Afghans themselves, the Mission will be able to carry out fully its lofty mandate.

The consistent and painstaking activities carried out by Ambassador Brahimi in the difficult social, political and humanitarian situation that developed in Afghanistan, and his personal courage, optimism and faith in the positive results of his peacekeeping mission deserve the highest praise. The Government of Tajikistan, which attaches great significance to the forthcoming activities of the Mission, will give it every type of support possible and is prepared to make its own contribution to the Mission's efforts to help the

Afghan people in their implementation of the peace process.

The President: I thank the representative of Tajikistan for his kind words.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Turkey, whom I invite to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Pamir (Turkey): It is with deep sorrow that we learned this morning about the devastating earthquakes that hit northern Afghanistan, whose death toll, according to reliable estimates, already approaches 5,000. We are short of words to describe the deep pain that we know our Afghan brothers are now enduring. Turkey will be taking part in the urgent task of assistance to the region.

We have already aligned ourselves with the statement made by Spain this morning on behalf of the European Union. I am here to explain, to a certain degree, Turkey's thinking with regard to the current situation in Afghanistan.

Not even four months have passed since the Interim Administration took office. After more than two decades of fighting that bore witness to the tragic events that befell this proud nation, a new era has begun in Afghanistan.

It is with satisfaction that we observe today the generally successful implementation of the Bonn Agreement. The support of the international community has been fundamental in this effort. That commitment remains vital to the success of the ongoing process. After all, security has not been fully ensured throughout the entire country. To be precise, I do not think that I can overemphasize the importance of maintaining the support of the international community under current conditions as we move towards the convening of the Loya Jirga.

We all hope that the convening of the Loya Jirga will constitute the first concrete step towards the establishment of a broad-based, representative political system in the country. This is clearly a critical threshold, and the Afghan people are looking to us, the international community, to help them in this important transitional phase. The permanent members of the Security Council in particular should impress upon the Afghan people their commitment to a smooth transition.

Long years of hardship and duress and the worst kind of fratricidal fighting all have taken their toll not only on the psyche of the Afghan people but also on the infrastructures that are essential to a functioning society. The country's great need for rehabilitation and reconstruction should be addressed forthwith. Agriculture, health and education are among the main problem areas that require urgent intervention.

There is a certain disillusionment today with the way reconstruction work is progressing. Understandably, the Afghan people are impatient. We need to find solutions quickly to many critical infrastructure problems, as these have a bearing on the security situation. We should be able to find ways to speed up the pace of reconstruction in Afghanistan.

Turkey has always wanted to see a modern administration in Afghanistan that would be in tune with the contemporary requirements of governing a country on the basis of stability, security and self-esteem, and this is also what we wish to see today. It was this vision and understanding that led Turkey to contribute effectively to the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF).

With respect to the future leadership of ISAF, our authorities are engaged in a continuing dialogue with their British and American counterparts concerning a whole range of military and technical questions. The questions that are being dealt with are all very relevant to the continued success of the important operation in Afghanistan, and all of the concerned parties understand this.

We welcome the comprehensive report of the Secretary-General, which reflects the many concerns we have about Afghanistan. Needless to say, we will be heartily supporting the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) in the fulfilment of its mandate, and we think that it would be worthwhile to integrate the efforts of the United Nations into a single mission.

Besides our active involvement in ISAF, we will continue to contribute to the military training and to the equipment of the Afghan national army. We also stand ready to contribute to the establishment of an Afghan police force. Likewise, we will be contributing to the restructuring of State organs, including through the training of personnel and reconstruction work in the country.

In this context, I am happy to report here that 20 young Afghan diplomats have already started their training in Ankara, and that the first batch of medical doctors to receive internship training have arrived in Turkey.

We should never forget that we have embarked upon this journey with the Afghan people and for the Afghan people. As the Secretary-General rightly states, the process of healing has just started.

For reasons that are clear to all of us, the only option open to us in Afghanistan is success. Hence the commitment of the international community, including that of the permanent members of the Council; of the countries contributing to ISAF; and of Afghanistan's neighbours to this vision of success is, and will remain, essential in the days and months to come.

On the basis of this understanding, we believe that the current mandate of ISAF should be extended for another term. By the same token, such an expansion requires a very careful and multifaceted analysis, the necessary elements of which are not yet available.

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Kazakhstan in which she requests to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the discussion without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Ms. Jarbussynova (Kazakhstan) took the seat reserved for her at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President: The next speaker on my list is the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Nejad Hosseinian (Islamic Republic of Iran): Mr. Minister, we are happy to see you in New York presiding over our important meeting today. My delegation is pleased to participate, under your presidency, in a Council debate on Afghanistan. I wish also to thank Ambassador Kolby and his colleagues for scheduling this meeting.

Allow me to express my deepest sorrow and sympathy and to offer condolences to the people and the Government of Afghanistan in connection with the earthquake that struck last night and devastated part of that country, causing further damage and bringing more suffering to the Afghan people.

What the Afghan people have achieved in the short period of time since the collapse of the Taliban and the establishment of the Afghan Interim Government is remarkable. The process of the orderly transfer of power — which had had no precedent in Afghan society for centuries — provided a glimmer of hope at a time when chaos and pessimism reigned. Thus far, the combination of the determination demonstrated by the Afghans, coupled with the assistance rendered by the international community, has contributed to bringing about relative stability in a country that has not seen peace and tranquillity for 23 years. The relative peace prevailing in Kabul, given that city's national importance and the psychological impact that this may have on the rest of the country, is also an impressive achievement. Moreover, a peaceful and quiet environment is imperative in order for the Interim Government to function and to extend gradually its authority to the provinces.

There should be no doubt that the Afghan people — exhausted, impoverished and yearning for peace — were the driving force behind the ultimate collapse of the Taliban, and that it is they who have subsequently maintained the relative peace prevailing in the country, despite the suspicion and hostility among ethnic communities and political groups. We are witnessing the start of the healing process. At this point, the Afghan people and their leaders, as well as Afghanistan's neighbours and the international community as a whole, should be careful not to allow the process to reverse itself.

We agree, however, that the situation throughout the country remains fragile and unpredictable. Reports indicating that the Taliban and Al Qaeda elements are regrouping are a cause for concern. Given the fact that the Afghan political system is still at an early stage of its development, any challenge by the near-defunct Taliban and Al Qaeda could be all the more damaging. In the meantime, I would like to warn that callous military operations in which innocent Afghans are

killed and their villages destroyed are all the more damaging, too.

There is no doubt that the continuation of suspicion and hostility among Afghan military commanders provides a favourable ground in which the terrorists can operate. Mistrust and friction among these commanders may also result in eroding the most valuable asset: the support of the Afghan people for the peace process and the Interim Administration. Therefore, we believe that strengthening the Afghan peace process by taking on board and bringing along the competing local commanders is among the best remedial actions to strengthen the peace process.

We believe that the responsibility for ensuring security in Afghanistan ultimately rests with the Afghans themselves. Therefore, the creation of an indigenous Afghan security sector should be the top priority of all Afghans and the various components of such a security sector should be established as soon as possible. In the meantime, we understand that an appropriate dose of international assistance is necessary to helping maintain peace on the ground. We believe that, given the sensitivities of the Afghans and past experience, it is in the interest of lasting peace in Afghanistan that the foreign presence in that country remain as minimal and as brief as possible and necessary.

Opium poppy cultivation and trafficking in drugs in Afghanistan have always been among the main sources of financing for the war machine of criminal and terrorist forces in Afghanistan. The resumption of poppy cultivation in the southern and eastern regions of Afghanistan, as reported by the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) in February and echoed in the latest report of the Secretary-General, is a great cause for concern. Still fresh in our memory is how the profit derived from narcotics substantially fed the warmongering Taliban and terrorists harboured by them. Drug money can still largely benefit the remnant of Taliban and Al Qaeda elements in Afghanistan. There can also be no doubt that, in the current unstable Afghan environment, the production of and trafficking in narcotics are all the more destabilizing and can lead to further confrontation among the local commanders, on the one hand, and between them and the central Government, on the other.

The Islamic Republic of Iran, as a country that has been engaged for years in a costly war against heavily armed drug traffickers on its eastern borders, is alarmed at the pre-assessment indicating the production of huge amounts of opium in Afghanistan this year. While UNDCP has pre-assessed that opium production is likely to be in the range of 1,900 to 2,700 tons this year, the estimate carried out by the relevant Iranian agency points to a larger production. For a variety of reasons, anti-narcotics activities should figure prominently on the agenda of the international community for Afghanistan. It is imperative that this illicit and inhumane business, of a complex and transnational nature, and the wide-ranging organized crime that it creates be dealt with decisively.

My Government commends and appreciates the determination and sense of purpose demonstrated by the Afghan Interim Administration in issuing a decree banning the cultivation, production, processing, use and trafficking of illicit drugs. Nonetheless, we understand that, in the circumstances, the Interim Administration needs the support of the international community in this area, without which the implementation of the decree would be almost impossible. We also welcome the plan to include in the new Afghan police force a strong and efficient drug-control unit. Iran has some experience in the crop substitution programme in Afghanistan and we are of the view that this is one of the effective ways of dealing efficiently with the issue. We hope that, in the forthcoming reports of the Secretary-General on Afghanistan, the issue of opium cultivation and drug trafficking will be adequately addressed and that the ways and means of combating the scourge of drugs emanating from Afghanistan, especially the ways in which the international community could assist, will be further elaborated.

To help stabilize the situation in Afghanistan, it is essential that Afghanistan's neighbouring countries build consensus and agree among themselves on how to contribute to the peace process in that country and to strengthen the Afghan Interim Authority. The holding of the first meeting of the "six-plus-two" group in Kabul on 11 March, with the Foreign Minister of the Interim Administration in attendance, is a welcome development. We believe that the inclusion of Afghanistan in these discussions opens a new and hopeful chapter in the dialogue to restore regional peace and stability. We look forward to seeing the

group meet regularly and become more active. The Islamic Republic of Iran, viewing the return of stability and normalcy to Afghanistan as in its self-interest, has already taken some steps to encourage cooperation among Afghanistan's neighbours, especially with regard to necessary actions to be taken to rebuild Afghanistan.

Iranian officials, consistent in their policy, have done their best to help the Afghans to stabilize and rebuild their country and hosted Chairman Karzai during his recent three-day State visit to Tehran. This visit was successful in providing an opportunity to the two countries' high-ranking officials to renew the historic friendly relations between the two nations and to lay the groundwork for the close involvement of Iran in rebuilding Afghanistan. During this visit, five agreements on wide-ranging cooperation between the two parties were signed.

Despite the porous nature of our long eastern borders, the Iranian Government has spared no efforts in recent months in denying Taliban and Al Qaeda elements entry into Iranian territory and the possibility of turning it into a staging ground for regrouping and re-entering Afghanistan. A number of Afghans and other foreign nationals who illegally and directly or indirectly entered Iranian territory over the past few months have been detained by Iranian law enforcement agencies. Some have already been handed over to their Governments; in the case of some others, their relevant Governments have yet to take action to receive them. We have also managed to pass on the names of these individuals to the Secretary-General. Likewise, the Iranian Government has also taken effective measures to ban any activities by Afghan nationals on Iranian soil against the Afghan Interim Administration. The measures include, among other actions, the expulsion of some Afghan activists from Iran.

As Mr. Karzai admitted in his address to the Iranian Parliament during his visit to Iran, the presence of millions of Afghan refugees in Iran for two decades has been a burden on Iranians' shoulders. We hope that the ongoing dialogue between the Afghan Government and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees on a programme for the voluntary return of refugees will lead in the near future to the start of an effective programme to that end.

Peace in Afghanistan was for centuries based on ethnic and religious harmony and the peaceful coexistence of different ethnic and religious communities. Coups, occupation and civil war broke that harmony and, hence, shattered the peace. We believe that fostering understanding among various segments of Afghan society is an effective way to restore lasting peace and to deprive the remnants of the Taliban and Al Qaeda of a breeding ground. In this context, while we greatly appreciate the initiative taken by Chairman Karzai to participate in and address a gathering in Kabul on the occasion of the martyrdom of Imam Hossein, the Third Imam of Shiites, we are very concerned about reports in the north about harassment of Pashtuns by other ethnic groups.

In closing, I wish to reiterate my Government's position on the need for the United Nations to continue its central and crucial role in assisting the Afghans to stabilize and rebuild their country. I commend the Secretary-General, his Special Representative and their colleagues in the Secretariat and the whole United Nations system for the latest comprehensive report and detailed proposed structure for a United Nations presence in Afghanistan. The Islamic Republic of Iran stands ready, where necessary, to extend its assistance to the United Nations to establish its new structure on the ground.

The President: I thank the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran for his kind words.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of New Zealand, whom I invite to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. MacKay (New Zealand): May I join others in expressing our condolences to the delegation of Afghanistan on the tragic earthquake that has struck their country very recently. I might also thank Norway for convening this open debate, which we consider a very timely initiative.

New Zealand welcomes the progress that has been made in bringing Afghanistan back into the community of nations. Without the tireless efforts of the United Nations, in particular those of the Secretary-General's Special Representative, the landmark Bonn Agreement and the installation of the Interim Administration in Kabul, this would not have been possible. While the situation clearly remains fragile and dangerous, we should acknowledge at the outset the important steps that have been taken in the rehabilitation of Afghanistan. With the continued help of the international community, we hope that the

Afghan people will be enabled to secure a more peaceful and prosperous future.

The next major step in the programme foreseen in the Bonn Agreement will be the convening of the emergency Loya Jirga in June. In the period leading up to that very significant date, we expect that the Interim Administration will step up its programme of integrating the work of regional and provincial authorities with its own. High on the agenda for the new governing structure should be the establishment of the commissions on judicial affairs and human rights, including the rights of women.

For its part, the United Nations is seeking to bring together its own functions in Afghanistan under the proposed United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). New Zealand very much welcomes the Secretary-General's proposals in his report for the structure and functioning of UNAMA and this first use of the concept of an integrated mission task force. When implemented, it will certainly stand as a tribute to Special Representative Lakhdar Brahimi, who proposed the concept when he was the United Nations special adviser on peacekeeping.

In its response to the crisis in Afghanistan, New Zealand has sought to provide effective emergency assistance to the Afghan people. Our initial response to the crisis was focused on the urgent humanitarian needs of refugees who reached our shores. We subsequently made a contribution of one million New Zealand dollars to the United Nations Consolidated Appeal for Afghanistan and have provided a quarter of a million New Zealand dollars for New Zealand non-governmental organizations to assist their work in Afghanistan.

At the Tokyo Conference on Reconstruction Assistance to Afghanistan, New Zealand pledged that we would remain engaged in the international aid effort to assist in the reconstruction of Afghanistan. We have followed up this pledge by announcing in the past week a further contribution of 600,000 New Zealand dollars for reconstruction efforts. New Zealand's contribution to these reconstruction efforts will be directed to projects identified in the Immediate and Transitional Assistance Programme for the Afghan People and through a further allocation towards New Zealand non-governmental organization activities in Afghanistan.

These contributions demonstrate New Zealand's firm commitment to support the Afghan Interim Authority and the Afghan people in their reconstruction efforts after nearly two decades of tragic war and upheaval. We stand ready to play our part in the reconstruction effort in partnership with the international community and with the Afghan people.

Clearly, a critical element for achieving a lasting peace is a successful demobilization, disarmament and reintegration programme. New Zealand experience, particularly in the Pacific, suggests that this programme should be integrated into the mission and addressed as part of the wider political process. Finding alternative activities for former combatants will be crucial.

New Zealand has also contributed personnel to the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and is the only country outside Europe so far to do so. In doing this, we have demonstrated a commitment to Afghanistan's stability and security. In the event that a decision is made to extend the mandate of ISAF beyond Kabul, New Zealand hopes that additional countries will join in the security operation. Only in stable and secure conditions will the personnel assigned by UNAMA to the seven regional centres outside Kabul be able to function effectively. New Zealand has long pressed for adequate measures to ensure the safety of United Nations personnel. In our view, the safety of UNAMA's regional personnel, as well as that of the Afghan population outside Kabul, needs to be taken into account in decisions on the future role and scope of ISAF.

The President: I thank the representative of New Zealand for his kind words.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Kazakhstan, whom I invite to take a seat at the Council table and to make her statement.

Ms. Jarbussynova (Kazakhstan) (*spoke in Russian*): First of all, on behalf of my Government, I would like to express the most sincere condolences to the people and Government of Afghanistan on the earthquake, which has resulted in great loss of life.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the Deputy Secretary-General, Ms. Louise Frechette, for her excellent submission of the Secretary-General's report on the item under consideration.

We support the major observations and conclusions of the report, and we share the Secretary-General's optimism with regard to the fact that, in spite

of the destruction of infrastructure and the great loss of life resulting from decades of war, Afghans representing all strata of society are prepared to take upon themselves the responsibility for the restoration of their long-suffering country. This thesis is confirmed by the activities of the Interim Administration, headed by Mr. Karzai, whose legitimacy is thus affirmed at the international level and within the country. Under his leadership, and in close cooperation with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Brahimi, a rehabilitation process in post-conflict Afghanistan is under way.

In Afghan society, there are positive changes taking place. There has been a successful conclusion of the campaign to return Afghan children to school. On 23 March, the new school year saw 1.5 million girls and boys sitting at their school desks. A Special Independent Commission for the Emergency Loya Jirga has done significant work, working out rules and procedures that pertain to the holding of a pan-national conference of elders. In the near future, we expect the establishment of a human rights commission. A national seminar in Kabul on human rights is an important step in the achievement of the provisions of the Bonn Agreement, which pertains to human rights.

At the same time, we note the continuing problem of ensuring security in the region. On the whole, the lack of security is leading to understandable concern on the part of the population of Afghanistan. Beyond Kabul, there is inter-ethnic conflict, skirmishes are taking place between political groups that are trying to establish their own influence, crime is persisting and the remaining Taliban and Al Qaeda fighters are destabilizing the already fragile peace in the region.

All of these factors show that there is a need for responsible measures to maintain the peace process. We agree with the Secretary-General about the need to extend the presence of the International Security Assistance Force, which is currently in Kabul, to other major cities, since the main threat to the Interim Administration is from the provinces, and there is a real possibility that, as the convening of a Loya Jirga approaches, that threat will increase.

Furthermore, the multinational forces are a temporary element. In connection with the Bonn Agreement, responsibility for ensuring security lies with the Afghan people themselves. In this context, we are encouraged by steps undertaken by the United States, Germany and other participants in the anti-terrorist coalition to establish a combat-ready national army and police force in Afghanistan for the maintenance of law and order. In order for these very important measures to be implemented in Afghanistan, we need further effective international support to ensure the proper conditions for future Afghan military forces.

From the very outset, the Government of Kazakhstan supported the appointment of Mr. Brahimi as Special Representative of the Secretary-General in the region. In our view, the format proposed for the United Nations presence in Afghanistan — the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, headed by Lakhdar Brahimi — will promote the successful conclusion of the peace process. We believe that the components that have been proposed will undoubtedly have a positive impact on the comprehensive rehabilitation of Afghan society.

Kazakhstan has always advocated the need for the earliest possible settlement of the situation in Afghanistan. Now, as the peace settlement process is entering the practical phase, Kazakhstan will work to take part in the political and economic phases of the international community's activities aimed at restoring Afghan society.

My Government is successfully cooperating with the World Food Programme, through which Kazakhstan is delivering to Afghanistan approximately 94,000 tons of grain, worth $12 million. We are also preparing for the possible participation of the Kazakhstan peacekeeping battalion in international forces to assist security efforts in Afghanistan.

The President: The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Afghanistan, to whom I give the floor.

Mr. Farhâdi (Afghanistan): At the outset, I would like to thank you, Mr. Minister, for coming here from Oslo to preside over this meeting on Afghanistan. We appreciate Norway's important humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan during these difficult times.

I would like to thank you, Mr. President, and the members of the Council, for having convened this timely meeting on the situation in Afghanistan. In addition, I express sincere thanks to those representatives who expressed their sympathies for the

devastating earthquake that took place in the village of Nahrin, located east of Baghlan and south of Kunduz.

I would also like to express my profound appreciation to Secretary-General Kofi Annan for his comprehensive report on Afghanistan dated 18 March 2002. We consider this report as reflecting the series of positive developments that have taken place since the demise of the Taliban and Al Qaeda.

Fortunately, in the recent report we do not see any accounts indicating gross violation of human rights, systematic massacre and deportation of the civilian population based on ethnic origin. Rather, the recent report sets out positive developments characterized by the restoration of human rights, in particular the rights of women, the reopening of educational institutions for boys and girls, the return of women to the civil service, and the continued efforts by the Afghan people, in coordination with the international community, to recover and to reconstruct Afghanistan's economic, political and cultural infrastructure. Those are the reasons why we consider that this report reflects the optimism and hope of the Afghan people.

I would like to take this opportunity to highlight the importance of the recent changes regarding the activities of the United Nations in Afghanistan. We are convinced that this new structure comes at a time when the consolidation of peace and reconstruction is of the utmost importance, given the current situation in Afghanistan.

In this context, it is relevant to stress the tireless and persistent efforts of Ambassador Lakhdar Brahimi, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, as well as the two newly appointed deputies, Mr. Nigel Fisher and Mr. Jean Arnault. We know both of them, and we value their experience and ability to perform their challenging assignments.

The formation of a national army and a police force remains a vital priority for the Interim Administration. The formation of a national army will serve as a symbol of national unity. The Interim Administration greatly appreciates the assistance of Member States in implementing that objective.

I would like to reiterate that the Interim Administration remains strictly committed to the implementation of the landmark Agreement signed in Bonn on 5 December 2001.

We are looking forward to convening of the Loya Jirga on 22 June 2002, which will lead to the establishment of the Transitional Authority.

With regard to the extension of the International Security Assistance Force —ISAF —beyond the capital, to which some delegates referred in today's meeting, we consider it imperative that the views of the Afghan Interim Administration should be sought.

In conclusion, I would like to make it clear that, in any political gathering or meeting of Afghans with regard to the future political destiny of Afghanistan, including the Loya Jirga, there should be no place for the Taliban and their supporters, whatever their denomination. Those who were stooges of foreign forces and brought havoc to the Afghan nation, violated basic human rights and committed atrocities against Afghans are considered as traitors and terrorists who have harboured international terrorists. They should not be entitled to be part of any political set-up in Afghanistan.

Afghan authorities consider that the 18 March 2002 report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Afghanistan deserves to be endorsed by this Council.

The President: I thank the representative of Afghanistan for his kind words addressed to me.

I now give the floor to the Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Mr. Danilo Türk, to respond to comments and questions raised.

The Assistant Secretary-General: On behalf of the Secretary-General, I would first like to thank all those who have spoken today for their encouraging words of support. It has been especially gratifying to hear unanimous support for the Secretary-General's proposals of a new United Nations mission in Afghanistan. I will also be sure to transmit to Mr. Brahimi your sustained confidence in his important work.

I noted very few specific questions. The representative of the United Kingdom did, however, ask whether the Secretariat foresaw a role in Afghanistan for the Internally Displaced Persons Unit of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. The Unit, which is based in Geneva, has already deployed an assessment mission to areas in Afghanistan with a high concentration of internally displaced persons. The mission's report is being

finalized, and its recommendations will be discussed in the coming days.

Whatever programmes emerge from these recommendations will be integrated into pillar II of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). On this point, I would like to underline that the concept of integration will allow the specific problem of internally displaced persons to be addressed with solutions that take into account and build on other development activities and the reconstruction of the country as a whole.

I focus on the integration, because it is at the heart of the Secretary-General's concept of UNAMA, which in turn represents an original model for a complex United Nations mission. The central idea is to have a coherent mission structure in which all aspects are carefully integrated with each other. The concept of integration is particularly important for human rights, which has been mentioned by a number of delegations today. In an integrated mission, the human rights mandate will not be the responsibility of a single office, but will be an integral part of activities carried out within various elements of both pillars.

While I would like to assume that the lack of questions reflects a general satisfaction with the direction that the United Nations has taken in Afghanistan, I do not take this as a sign of complacency. At the same time, I have duly taken note of a number of concerns that have been raised, including the question of narcotics. And I assure you that these concerns will also be conveyed to Mr. Brahimi, as well as to other relevant parts of the United Nations system.

Before concluding, I feel that it is important to reiterate that we must not become complacent. The earthquake last night reminded us of how vulnerable Afghanistan remains to the forces of nature. Our own analysis and numerous news reports continue to remind us that Afghanistan is equally vulnerable to human forces.

On this point I would like to stress an issue raised by a good number of delegations, and that is the importance of security. I welcome the strong support for the extension of the mandate of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) past June and hope that the Council will take action to bring that about. I also wholeheartedly agree with the representative of the United Kingdom when he calls for an expansion of the ISAF effect beyond Kabul, and I look forward to further suggestions and specific ideas of how to bring this effect of ISAF beyond Kabul into being.

Finally, we cannot afford to become complacent about the need to provide support — financial support in particular — for the Interim Administration, the Loya Jirga process and humanitarian reconstruction and development activities. The Interim Administration Fund run by the United Nations Development Programme, which has allowed Mr. Karzai's Government to function with some success, urgently needs replenishment if the Administration is to keep its commitments until June.

In this regard, let me say, Mr. Minister, that it is a particular privilege to have this meeting under your presidency, as the Government of Norway not only chairs the Afghanistan Support Group, but is also one of the largest and most consistent contributors to the Interim Administration Fund, as well as to other humanitarian assistance efforts in Afghanistan.

In conclusion, let me restate my gratitude for the support shown today by Council members and non-members alike, for the Secretary-General's proposal regarding the mandate and structure of UNAMA and for the work that the United Nations has accomplished so far in Afghanistan. I look forward to the draft resolution that will be submitted tomorrow on the establishment of the new Mission.

The President: I thank the Assistant Secretary-General for the clarifications and answers he has provided and for the kind words he has addressed to me.

There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council will remain seized of the matter.

The meeting rose at 4.50 p.m.